

IN QUEST OF YESTERDAY A HISTORY OF HALIBURTON

by NILA REYNOLDS

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Instalment Thirty-Five THE MINDEN STORY Chapter 11

From confederation itself until the hungry '30's when the custom was temporarily discontinued, no one could accuse the people of the Minden area of any lack of patriotic feeling. What the fiesta is to Mexico and the mardi gras is to New Orleans, Dominion Day was to Minden village. It was the major event on the whole calendar dwarfing even Christmas and it was observed with a fervor worthy of those founding fathers of confederation who, led by that political giant Sir John A. Macdonald, "Providence being their guide, builded better than they knew."

Like the famous Capt. William, veteran of the Crimean War, and James and Samuel Welch who settled in Stnhope township, John Welch who tended his anvil beside the Gull River for most of the working years of his life, was a Dorsetshire man. The roots of the Welch family were buried deep in the traditions of that lovely English garden county bordering on the channel which lies between the pleasant land of Devon and Hampshire. Here, in 1502, prior to the Protestant reformation, the Welch family presented a bell to the monks of Sherbourne abbey.

Mr. Walter Noice (his mother was Mary-Welch) has in his possession a carved antique door knocker from Dorset which represents the jolly monks and their bell and bears this inscription:

"By Welch's gift I measure time for all.
To mirth, to grief, to church I serve to call.
Great Tom 1502 A.D.

With such a family background it is understandable why John Welch should take advantage of Dominion Day to found customs to be handed down to posterity.

The night before July 1 was filled with feverish activity. After the preparations for the athletic events were completed, and the rope to test the balance of the more adventurous of the population strung across the river above the bridge, John Welch and his sons, assisted by John Morphet of the Scotch line, carried the two great anvils to the river.

Before daybreak the anvil aperture was stuffed with blasting powder and a fuse inserted. The second anvil was placed on top. Promptly at 4 a.m. on the morning of July 1 John Welch ceremoniously applied a match to the fuse. The resulting explosion, echoing along the river for 10 miles, started Dominion Day off with a soul satisfying bang worthy of such a grand occasion.

Everyone in the village co-operated to make the day an outstanding success. Commercial travelers were

solicited for contributions to the fund from which the prize money was paid and most of the business men of the district helped supervise the various athletic events. The ladies took charge of the refreshment booths. For many years Mrs. Ed. Noice, assisted by Mrs. Dean, Mrs. H. Soward and various other women, ran such a stand in a little building located on the south side of what is now Currie's department store. It dispensed lemonade, candy, oranges and bananas and best of all—ice cream prepared before hand in the huge freezers borrowed for the occasion from St. Paul's Anglican Church. The boys who chopped the ice for, and turned the handles of those unwieldy machines probably had sore arms but these would be soon forgotten if they were paid off in the delicious results. Many a Minden child first tasted ice cream at this refreshment mecca whose pilgrimage was such a delight.

By 10 a.m. the dirt roads for miles around were filled with the dust which flowered behind every kind of horse drawn transport invented to date loaded to capacity with family, bulging lunch basket plus assorted neighbors and children picked up en route.

The river bloomed with boats and canoes loaded to the water line with gayly garbed passengers eager to celebrate the birthday of their country.

In addition to its normal population, Minden was flooded with river drivers from all the company drives which happened to be within walking distance. A logger who had to miss the Dominion Day festivities considered himself badly treated indeed. One of Minden's older residents who has passed his 80th birthday recalls one particular July 1 when a couple of entertaining Italians came to town with a hand organ and a trained dancing bear. They coined a mint of money from the jubilant shanty boys who showered the talented bruin with coins and kept him tripping the light fantastic until he almost dropped from exhaustion.

Minden was always a popular spot with the men who herded the logs to market so it was natural many of the main events on Dominion Day featured aquatic sports. To protect those who participated, a punt, purchased by the Women's Institute, was always kept available near the bridge.

Unfortunately the names of many of the winners of those thrilling contests of yesteryear have been forgotten. However, in later years both the log burling and the tight rope walking competitions were won at various times by Richmond Hogg, and Tom Harrison. Top canoe men were Fred Sawyer, Victor Alsop and Cecil Stamp.

One of the most engaging events

from a human interest angle may have been the mixed double canoe races which began at the landing of the John Snell house (now owned by E. Windover) and finished at the bridge. Many a couple who started out paddling together at the July 1 races ended up before the altar at a later date.

Another competition pandering to romantic entanglements was the thread and needle race held on the main street. The lady of the team stood at the finishing post with the needle while her gentleman friend ran with the thread which must be poked through the needle's eye first before they could be declared winners. The prize? One dollar hard cash. In those days many couples started out with less.

A 1916 Minden Echo, dated July 7, which escaped the zeal of 45 spring house cleanings, notes that during the Dominion Day sports that year S. W. Welch and Clayton Rogers (often a winner along with Walter McKelvey in the throwing and shoulder stone event) tied for first place in the 100 yard dash. Jim Brohm was winner in the throwing of the 18 pound shot while James Fairfield topped the canoe race with Jones, Moore and Rogers in the mixed doubles.

The best location for a ring side view of the water sports was near the bridge which provided the finishing point for most of the races. It was here that the tight rope to test the nimbleness and balance of the river men was strung. The prize went to the man, who carrying a pike pole could walk the furthest along the swaying rope which in the centre dipped below the surface of the water.

Walking this rope was a main attraction at most Dominion Days, but in 1921 its slippery surface took the life of a promising Minden youth and cast a tragic shadow over the July 1 celebration.

The victim was 15 year old John Albert Smith, a son of Robert James Smith whose violin music was so popular in the village, and a grand son of Walter and Harriet Smith who pioneered Anson township.

A Minden Echo thus describes the disaster: "A rope had been stretched across the stream above the bridge in preparation for the sports next day, and several of the boys had used it as a means to pull themselves across the water. When John, who was in the employ of Mr. E. A. Rogers, arrived home for supper, he decided to take a dip before eating. On nearing the middle of the rope he was seen to lose his hold and being unable to swim, the swift current (it has been clocked at 11 miles per hour below the bridge) carried him beyond reach. "The alarm was immediately given but nobody nearby was able to

swim well enough to go to his assistance and before proper help could arrive, he had gone to the bottom. The work of rescue from boats was begun but the swift and deep water made recovery very difficult, and it was not until 45 minutes had passed that the body was brought up by Mr. Wesley Switzer."

With so many events to be run off, Dominion Day must have been more than a little like a three ring circus. There were foot races for all ages, swimming races, jumping competitions, hurdle and sack races and running through barrels. The longer foot races and horse races were started at Cox's bridge on the road north of the river and ended amid thunderous applause on the main street.

What a terrific din the hooves of those racing horses must have raised as they crossed the wooden bridge just before the finishing post "at a faster pace than a walk."

This was the one occasion when the sporting men of the village could disregard the bridge law under the very eyes of law enforcement officer, M. Garratt, who patrolled the district perched high on his one seated democrat which was drawn by a white mare. Older residents recall that Mr. Garratt favored a wide brimmed straw hat winter and summer.

Not so Mr. Delamere, who, like Mr. Ephraim C. Young, must have helped prepare and supervise the program of athletic contests. Mr. Delamere's taste ran to a plug hat and striped pants. For many years he drove a fine team of matched Shetland ponies. You may be sure that Mr. Delamere, Mr. Young and Mr. Garratt all had a place in the grand parade up main street the dust of which had been temporarily controlled by liberal applications of water from the village fire pump.

What a thrilling sight that parade must have been! The blaring music, the high stepping horses drawing gaily decorated vehicles filled with people in costumes representing every era of fashion from 1859 on. As soon as cars became popular, they took their place in the parade decked out in flowers, greenery and bunting.

As if this wasn't enough, the day terminated with a gala dance in the town hall with everyone hoeing it down in fine style.

In the '30's, when the shadows cast by the depression grew long, the Dominion Day celebrations at Minden were discontinued. However, in 1960 the institution was revived to the delight of everyone who could remember when the first day of July was the most important of the whole calendar. It is to be hoped that this important custom will be continued.

(Continued next week)

Haliburton's Grand Old Man Attains His 101st Birthday

Few people live to attain the distinction of 101st birthdays, but on February 17 of this year the district's oldest citizen, Mr. William Gregory, still zestfully enjoyed every minute of his triumph.

On this unique occasion Mr. Gregory has several folks drop in and enjoy a cup of tea with him at the West Guilford home of his daughter, Mrs. Lorne Barry. He and his daughter, Mrs. Mae Cook of Haliburton are spending the winter there.

In spite of his years, Mr. Gregory enjoys the company and conversation of his many friends and delights to recall the early years in the Haliburton area.

An ardent hockey fan who has followed the career of the Toronto Maple Leafs since the earliest Foster Hewitt broadcasts of their games, Mr. Gregory was the recipient on his 100th birthday of an enlarged picture of the team personally auto-

graphed by each member of the team and inscribed: "To Mr. William Gregory, our best wishes on your 100th birthday—the Toronto Maple Leafs."

Born in Lindsay on February 17, 1860, Mr. Gregory is the son of the late George Gregory and his wife Charlotte Gregory. At the age of nine his parents moved to the farm now owned by Mrs. Ed. Elstone on Sawyer's Lake.

Mr. Gregory recalls standing beside his mother at their cabin door while a number of Chippawa canoes crossed the lake enroute from a hunting expedition.

The Gregory family later relocated on a Harburn farm and it was here in 1881 Mr. Gregory brought his bride, Miss Margaret Anne Bateson of Peterboro.

Before moving to Haliburton in 1915, 11 children, three of whom died in infancy,

were born to Mr. and Mrs. Gregory; Ethel, Mrs. John Todd of Burkes Falls; Richard, a sniper in the 109th Battalion who was killed in action November 29, 1916; Mabel, Mrs. Donald Roberts of Trail, B.C.; Elizabeth, Mrs. Otto Miller of Toronto; Mary Catherine, Mrs. Morris Cook of Haliburton; John of Rochester, N.Y.; Ira of Toronto and Blanche with whom he makes his home, who also celebrated a birthday on February 16.

Mr. Gregory has 45 grandchildren, 72 great grandchildren and 10 great-great-grandchildren.

Mr. Gregory, whose years span the transition era between ox-cart and atomic power, has a treasure trove of colorful memories to brighten his quiet years; his early days clearing the homestead at Harburn, the winters spent on his trap line in the Algonquin Park, before its incorporation with the surveyors Mr. Nevin and Mr. Wm. Ritchie and the journeys all over Ontario, especially the survey of the trans-continental railway line to James Bay; his later years as a guide to hunting

and fishing parties from all over North America.

It is the sincere wish of the community that Mr. Gregory will enjoy many more happy birthdays.

It is an interesting coincidence that another centenarian, Thomas Masco of Boskung, who died in 1933 in his 104th year, was also born on February 17.

—Watchman-Warder.

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FOR quick sale. Complete portable sawmill, ready to run, less power unit. Capacity when operating, 8-10M feet lumber per day. No reasonable offer refused. Bannon Lumber Co., Telephone 67J1, Haliburton.

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THE ECHO

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Card of Thanks

Words cannot express my appreciation to my many friends who so kindly remembered me with cards, gifts, visits and inquiries while in Humber Memorial Hospital, Weston, and while at my daughter's home in Whitby.
—Jack Rae.

In Memoriam

Sedgwick—In loving memory of Bryan Francis Sedgwick who departed this life suddenly March 16, 1960:

We think of him in silence
His name we oft recall
There is nothing left to answer

But his picture on the wall.
—Sadly missed and ever remembered by aunt Berny, uncle Orval, Bob, Bill and Elizabeth.

Sedgwick—In loving memory of a wonderful son and brother, Bryan Francis Sedgwick, who died on March 16, 1960:

A page in the book of memory,

Silently turns today,
We remember you in silence
And make no outward show,
But what it meant to lose you

No one will ever know.
—Sadly missed by mom, dad and Marlene.

EAGLE LAKE

Mr. Karl Hanke, who is employed in Montreal spent the last week with his family here.

Mr. Carl Wallace, Grant and Cathy are spending a week's holiday with her parents in West Hill.

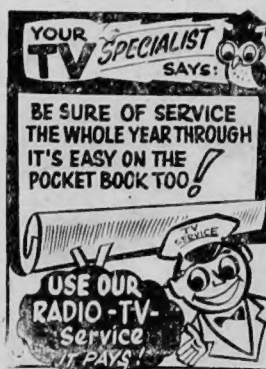
A speedy recovery to Mrs. Bob Moore, at present in St. Joseph's Hospital, Toronto; and to Mr. Closs Barry, ill at his home.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Sargeant of Peterboro were week end visitors with Mrs. C. Schroter and Candy.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Morrison and family, who have been living in Sault Ste. Marie during the winter, have returned home.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Meredith and children of Peterboro spent the week end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. Barry.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Cote were week end visitors in Mat-tawa.



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Minden News Notes

Mr. Earl Ward is in Toronto for a few days this week taking a C.I.L. refresher course.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Russell and boys of Peterboro spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Alton and family.

Patients at the local hospital on Monday were Mrs. Lily Coulter, Roger Nesbitt, Clifford Dusti, Mr. McCullough and Mrs. Lunham.

Congratulations to Mrs. Harvey MacIntosh on the arrival of her baby girl and to Mrs. Dorothy Nicholson on the arrival of her baby boy.

At the card party by the W.I. at the Orange hall last Friday winners were Ethel Leigh, Bill Hounsell, Flo Dollo, Flo and Earl Hewitt, Molly Noice. After the card games were over a tasty lunch was served by the ladies.

Sympathy of the community to Irvin House whose father died very suddenly last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Manley Yearwood and family of Fenelon Falls spent Sunday with the Cecil Yearwoods.

Mrs. D. Gibbs is spending a while visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Jim Graham and other friends in the village.

Sympathy of the village to the family and friends of the late Mrs. George Robert.

WEST GUILFORD

Two hockey teams from West Guilford competed for the Monmouth trophies at Wilberforce.

The pee-wees played a good game, but the final score was 1-0 in favor of Wilberforce.

The bantams, under the guidance of coach Carl Saw-year, had no difficulty in winning their game and bringing home the trophy with a score of 5-2.

The West Guilford recreation club served a delicious turkey dinner to all our boys who played hockey in the junior leagues. We are very proud of their behaviour and success this past season and trust this fine sport may help them to become better men and citizens of the future.

We are very sorry to hear Blain Sisson, one of our promising young hockey players met with an accident Saturday night. All who know this fine young boy will hope his injuries are not too serious.

Mr. and Mrs. Chessel Sisson and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Sisson and Nancy spent the week end with friends in Toronto.

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Cowan entertained the members of their bowling club to a tasty luncheon after the game last Tuesday.

Recent visitors at the home of Bill and Vi Smith were Dr. and Mrs. Gillen and family of St. Catharines, Mr. and Mrs. Crowfoot of Campden, Mrs. Dorothy Sanguin, Mr. and Mrs. Kaye Sangwin and Mr. Fred Coleman of Toronto and Mr. Stanley Smith of Huntsville.

Although last Thursday was a very stormy night, many euchre players met at the Green Canoe restaurant for a friendly game of cards and lunch.

son who died suddenly last week end.

Visitor for a while with her son, Mr. Gordon McKay and his family is Mrs. R. G. McKay.

Sympathy of their friends and neighbors is extended to the family of Mrs. Jack Walker who died very suddenly at the home of her son, Mr. Fred Walker.

* * *

Minden W.M.S.

The W.M.S. of Minden United Church met in the church hall last Thursday with Mrs. N. Ward presiding. Mrs. Fleming gave a reading "The Voice of the Cross." Mrs. L. Coburn and Mrs. Finlay had charge of the worship service.

Following this Mrs. Fleming gave a talk on how future prisoners in penitentiaries will be given more training, instead of so much punishment.

Mrs. Ward gave an account of the annual presbytery held in Lindsay to which no one was able to go.

Mrs. Coburn read from the study book a chapter entitled, "Of the Coming of the Cousins."

After the meeting Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Finlay served a very tasty lunch and a social half hour was enjoyed by all.

CARNARVON

Mr. Bert Harrison of Trenton has been the guest of Mr. Ed. Harrison for the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. Andy Mar-ranco of Hamilton spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. Amos Miscio and Josie Miscio went back to Hamilton with them for a few days.

Mr. and Mrs. S. G. Nesbitt have returned from their trip though the U.S. where they visited the Indiana horse show.

Mr. Alex Hewitt and Mr. Bob Cowan were visitors in Toronto last week.

We wish a speedy get well to Mrs. Ronnie Harrison who is a patient in the Ross Memorial Hospital, Lindsay.

Miss Barbara Russell of Toronto spent the week end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sinc Russell.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Thomas spent last week end with Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Thomas at Sturgeon Falls.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Bob Barnhart on the birth of their daughter.

Quite a few new cars are seen on our roads today. Lucky owners are S. G. Nesbitt, Bill McKay, Jamie Chambers and Ralph Hussey. Mr. and Mrs. Roger Harrison and Lisa spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. Hal Burton.

Mr. and Mrs. Bud Medley and Mrs. Norman Finney motored to Toronto on Friday to attend the "Musical 61" put on by the Toronto Teachers' College choir.

The Friendly Neighbors held their meeting last Thursday night at the home of Mrs. George Cowan.

Mr. Cliff Skelding was a business visitor in Maple on Monday and Tuesday.

Last Tuesday night the Carnarvon bowling league held a very successful card party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stan Archer.

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5c a copy